

UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

School of Management

The public administration's service quality, transparency and citizen satisfaction: A
study in Ho Chi Minh City

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The month and year of completion: April, 2016

University of Tampere

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Title of the thesis: The public administration's service quality, transparency and citizen satisfaction: A study in Ho Chi Minh City

Master's thesis: 61 pages, 5 appendices

Date: March, 2016

Key words: Public administration's service quality, Transparency, Citizen satisfaction, Ho Chi Minh City.

ABSTRACT

Ho Chi Minh city is the center of economy, culture and education of Vietnam. The goal of Ho Chi Minh government is to enhance citizen satisfaction to gain objective of administrative reform. However, so far the percentage of citizen satisfy with public services is very low. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the effects of service quality as well as transparency on citizen satisfaction in the public administration sector in Ho Chi Minh City. The survey was distributed to citizens who used public administration services at 4 public administrative organizations in Ho Chi Minh City including People's Committee of District 1; People's Committee of Dakao Ward, District 1 (represent urban area); People's Committee of Govap District and People's Committee of Ward 6, Govap District (represent rural area). Total 240 questionnaires were sent and 200 questionnaires were collected (80% response rates).

Descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling were conducted to analyze the data. Results indicated that service quality significantly related with citizen satisfaction. Four factors which constitute service quality affected citizen satisfaction including Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance and Reliability. In particular, responsiveness was the strongest affecting factor which brought the highest satisfaction level of citizens. The findings can be used as a guide for Ho Chi Minh city government to enhance citizen satisfaction. Besides, the result of data analysis also showed that transparency did not relate with citizen satisfaction in the public administration sector in Ho Chi Minh city.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is performed to complete the Master of public administration program, University of Tampere, Finland. To accomplish this master thesis, I have received a lot of encouragement and support of many individuals and groups.

First and foremost, I would like to express profound gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Harri Laihonen has guided and offered the needed directions.

I am also grateful to Professors at the University of Tampere, Finland have given me knowledge and skills to become a professional management in the Master of public administration program.

I am also thank sincerely to Vice President Dr. Tran Ha Minh Quan, Doctors, staffs of UEH, University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City have created an opportunity for me in the learning process.

Finally, I would like to thank family, managers and staffs in my organization for their help and contribution towards this study.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Rationale of the research

Today, administrative reform is a global trend. Both the developing country and the development country have considered the administrative reform as a motive power in order to promote economic growth, enlarge democratization and develop other aspects of social life (Đinh, 2014).

In Vietnam, the goal of administrative reform in the period of 2010-2020 is to make the administrative system more complete, the operation more efficiently; improve the public administration service quality and the public service quality; transform public administration from governing agency to people serving agency (Resolutions 30c / NQ-CP of the Government dated 08/11/2011). Therefore, the goal of Vietnam government is to improve service quality to make sure high citizen satisfaction, because citizen satisfaction is a measure to assess the effectiveness of the public administration as well as the belief of people towards the state apparatus.

Concepts concerning service quality, such as “total quality management” (TQM) and “new public management” (NPM) have been adopted by organizations in the public sector in most developed countries from the time when the early 1990s (Agus, Barker & Kandampully, 2007). Public management model also has already transformed from the NPM to the public value management (PVM) (Zaitul *et al.*, 2014). Promberger, Rauskala (2003) stated that the main objective of NPM is to reform the organization and processes of service in the public sector with focusing customer-oriented service. The NPM stresses results rather than inputs and procedures as well as emphasize the role of the state in providing service to citizens. According to Bezes *et al.* (cited by McKoy, 2004) NPM includes many organizational principles such as: establishing an independent administrative agency; decentralization; empowering consumer; setting objectives; transforming bureaucratic hierarchies; measuring and evaluating performance. Recently, the development of e-government is interested in doing as a solution to improve the quality of public administration services. According to Siddiqi (2011) service quality is one of the important success factors that affect the competitiveness of an institution. Service quality has become more important to the reaching of customer satisfaction with the

increasing of the need and expectation of customers. So, it is vital to search the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

In public sector, provided services are responsible to citizens and communities as well as to its customers. According to Gowan *et al.* (cited by Anthony Sumnaya Kumasey, 2014) service provision in the public sector is more complex because it is not simply a matter of providing services, but of setting priorities, allocating resources, transparency and explaining for what has been done. In addition, Caron & Giauque (cited by Anthony Sumnaya Kumasey, 2014) affirmed that employees in public sector have faced with new professional challenges because managers arise application new principles and tools from the change of new public management. Andreassen (1994) asserted that main challenge in the public sector is decrease in budgets and increase in user expectations in a period. In other words, how to produce the same amount (or more) of services which satisfy what customer need at lower costs. Furthermore, Chi-Kuang *et al.* (cited by Chatzoglou *et al.*, 2013) the main purpose of public sector organization is providing social benefits with a reasonable budget resource. So, it can be recognized that public sector organizations meet increasing pressure to deliver quality services and improve performance.

Customer satisfaction plays very significant role for business to obtain competitive advantage in the market. It can be seen that the both the organizations and businesses also recognize the importance of marketing strategies by enhancing customer satisfaction to increase customer loyalty and raise rate of return (Angelova & Zekiri, 2011). Customer satisfaction helps organizations to get information about the first choices, needs and wants of customers. Many researchers affirmed that customer satisfaction is one of the significant results in marketing and customer research (Oliver, Surprenant and Churchill, Spreng, Mick and Fournier, cited by Siddiqi, 2011). Cummings (2014) stated that the customer is king. Public service also comes under the service. Provision of quality services for public sectors also is a challenge for the many governments around the globe. The governments are doing their best in order to gain their satisfaction (Khan, Batool, Scholar & Hussain, 2015). Anthony Sumnaya Kumasey (2014) also stated that many satisfaction studies have asserted that customer satisfaction concerned with loyalty. Therefore, the main objective of service providers is to

provide services which satisfy needs and expectations of customer. However, provision of service quality in public organizations is low and slow improvement (Anthony Sumnaya Kumasey, 2014). To link the service quality and customer satisfaction is important. Agus, Barker & Kandampully, (2007) studied that there were relationships between service quality and customer satisfaction. The study also highlighted the need for improving the supply of public service quality which focuses on approach of customer-oriented. Kumar (cited by Siddiqi, 2011) stated that high quality service will create high customer satisfaction as well as increases customer loyalty.

On the other hand, transparency is a concept which has become popularly during the last twenty years (Ahlberg & Jonnergard, 2014). Today, transparency is used to describe information that is released by organizations. This is a demand of public organizations as well as private organizations or from different units within an organization. According to Florini *et al.* (2000) increasing transparency creates encouragement for governments and businesses to provide information. Florini *et al.* (2000) also stated wrote that the concept of transparency is often wrote in documents about the European Union, the IMF, and the World Bank. This concept including democracy, access to information, and this has brought the EU closer to its citizens. Additionally, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2003) showed that transparency in public sector is good not only for investors, but also for development as well as bring effect for public governance. Transparency measures help governments reduce negative effects from citizen and enhance their positive contributions.

Ljungholm (2015) stated that in the public sector transparency is an important element in enhancing citizen satisfaction. Futhermore, the study of the roles of transparency as well as trust in the link between corruption and citizen satisfaction in the public service by Park & Blenkinsopp concluded that transparency significantly enhance citizen satisfaction (Park & Blenkinsopp, 2011). In addition, in Vietnam the studies about citizen satisfaction in the public sector also indicated that transparency element affects significantly on citizen satisfaction (Dam, Do & Pham, 2014; Lê, 2011).

Currently, Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) is one of the first localities in the country in terms of administrative reform. The goal of Ho Chi Minh government is to enhance citizen satisfaction to gain objective of administrative reform. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effects of service

quality as well as transparency on citizen satisfaction in the public administration sector in HCMC. From that point, this study can provide some of the necessary information for city governments in order to improve citizen satisfaction in the next time. This also contributes to the economic and social growth in HCMC.

1.2 Problem Statement

The goal of economic - social development in Vietnam requires government need provide public administration services better in the context of life quality is becoming raise. In recent years, Vietnam in general and HCMC in particular has focused on innovation and improvement in supply quality of service public administration, which is considered as an important step to enhance citizen satisfaction. HCMC has applied information technology to improve quality of service, checking to eliminate unnecessary procedures causing inconvenience to people, shortening the process of services supply, implementation of administrative mechanism "one door, one stamp" in the districts and the "one door" in the key departments - the key sector which have a direct relationship with the organization and the citizens (Lam, 2014; Communist Party of Vietnam online newspaper).

However, so far the percentage of citizen satisfy with public services is very low. According to Mr. Đinh Duy Hoa, Head of Administrative Reform in the Ministry of Interior (cited by Nguyen, 2011) said that less than 20% citizen satisfy with public services. As reported by the People's Committee of HCMC surveying satisfaction index of organizations and citizens on public service in 2013 (cited by Hoang, 2014) wrote that the majority of public services with satisfaction index is only on average, while some public services has low satisfaction index. In addition, survey results about public administration performance index (PAPI) from 2011 to 2014 indicated that improved level of service quality is negligible (Quoc, 2015). To more clarify, 49% of respondents said that they bribed when applying for work; 43% have put the envelope to get taking care better than when having illness; 33% need to "lubricate" when having the certificates of land use rights; 30% have put envelopes to teachers for their children more attention (Quoc, 2015).

Since exploratory study of service quality, transparency and customer satisfaction in the public sector (Agus *et al.*, 2007; Dam *et al.*, 2014). In HCMC, however, studies have still not examined these links. Finding factors that affect customer satisfaction in public administration services in HCMC are empirical. That is why the author has chosen topic: "The public administration's service quality, transparency and citizen satisfaction: A study in Ho Chi Minh City" for the thesis.

1.3 Research objectives, Research methodology and Research scope

The study of Agus *et al.* (2007) affirmed that service quality significantly affects on citizen satisfaction in the public sector in Malaysia and the study of Dam et al (2014) resulted that transparency affects on citizen satisfaction at tax departments Da nang District, Tuyen quang Province, Vietnam. So, this paper examines:

- The effect of service quality on citizen satisfaction when they use public administration services in the HCMC;
- The effect of transparency on citizen satisfaction in the public administration sector in the HCMC.

The research consists of two phases; a qualitative study and a main survey that have been conducted public administrative organizations in Ho Chi Minh City include People's Committee of District 1; People's Committee of Dakao Ward, District 1, People's Committee of Govap District; People's Committee of Ward 6, Govap District. This study uses a questionnaire to collect data which was originally developed in English and has been translated into Vietnamese. It has also been modified through qualitative test. The purpose of the qualitative phase is to modify Vietnamese questionnaire version by in-depth interview with 200 citizens before conducting the main survey. The questionnaire was implemented in 4 public administrative organizations in Ho Chi Minh City that present urban and rural area to make sure that the data would represent the characteristics of Vietnamese citizens. The next stage is to analyze the collected data. SPSS 20 and Amos 20 was used to test the model. The reliability and the validity were tested by Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The model is then further analyzed by Structural equation modeling (SEM).

1.4 Scope of the study

According to Website of HCMC government the HCMC is the most population city in Vietnam, is also the center of economy, culture and education of Vietnam. Total area of HCMC is 2,095.5 km² and the population of HCMC is 8,224,400 (2015). With its favorable geographical location, Saigon - which was once called the "Pearl of the Orient" and a meeting place of many ethnic groups, different cultures, different beliefs. So, HCMC culture is very diverse and this diverse cultural characteristics forms the lifestyle, personality of people in HCMC. That is people who are candid, liberal, dynamic, to dare to think, to dare to do. HCMC public administration organizations include government of 24 Districts and 222 Wards directly under the government of 24 districts. Those public administration units are located at the urban area and rural area (Website of HCMC government).

Almost public administration processes that relate communication with citizens are conducted at District government (People's Committee of District) and directly under the government of District government that calls the Ward government (People's Committee of Ward). Those public administration processes include certified true copies, marriage certificates, marital status certificates, birth - death certificates, business licensing, construction permits, employment confirm, etc. The customer (citizen) go to head office of District government and Ward government and meet the civil servant to perform requests concerning one of the these processes. According to Mai (2015) the aim of HCMC government is make modern public administration system, by applying information technology and decreasing the bureaucracy of the public sector. Mai (2015) also confirmed that the role of civil servant is very significant to make sure citizen satisfaction . Thus, exploring the effects of service quality as well as transparency on citizen satisfaction in HCMC contributes to the city government and literature form customer perspective. However, because of limited time and resource, the research is narrowed down to some typical public administrative units, which might represent public administrative units in term of geography. Therefore, organizations for studying are as follows: People's Committee of District 1; People's Committee of Dakao Ward, District 1 (represent urban area) and People's Committee of Govap District; People's Committee of Ward 6, Govap District (represent

urban area). The respondents are citizen above 18 years old who have been using public administration services at above -mentioned public administrative organizations in HCMC.

1.5 Structure

The research is presented with structural comprise five chapters. Chapter one introduces about the problem statement, rationale of the research, research objectives and structure of the proposal thesis.

Chapter two presents an overview of the previous research on service quality, transparency and customer satisfaction as well as develops hypotheses and the conceptual framework of the study.

Chapter three focuses on the research methodology including research procedure, measurement scales, sample and data collection process, and data analysis method.

Chapter four is a detail of the findings as well as results of study. This chapter includes descriptive statistics, reliability and validity testing, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling and discussion of research findings.

Chapter five, the final chapter presents the conclusions which were represented by the findings as well as recommendations to improve citizen satisfaction for public administration services in HCMC. This chapter also mentions the study limitation and the suggestion for future research.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concepts and definition of service quality, transparency and customer satisfaction

2.1.1 Service quality in public sector

a. Service quality

Service quality has significantly attended to managers, researchers, practitioners during the past few decades because service quality has huge impacted on any organization performance (Angelova & Zekiri, 2011). There are various definitions about service quality. This depends on the object of study and research environment and survey of service quality term is the basis for measures of implementation in order to get better the service quality of the organization, enterprise.

Lovelock & Wright (cited by Anthony, 2014) stated that after deciding a purchase, customers compare the expected service with received service. Customers decide they satisfy with service outcome or not, and they also make evaluations about quality. It can be seen that the concept of service quality is to relate the concept of customer satisfaction but they are not exactly the same (Anthony, 2014). Many researchers believe that customers' evaluations about quality are based on long term because that is cognitive evaluations of an service delivery of an organization. Customer satisfaction is a short term because it reflects a specific service experience.

According to Crosby (cited by Angelova & Zekiri, 2011) defined service quality as accordance with requirement. Yilmaz (cited by Saglik *et al.*, 2014) described that service quality is as customers' expectations and perceptions about the service offered. Thus, the same perceived service that can be evaluate high quality by a customer and low quality by another customer. Consequently, it can be seen that service quality depends on the customer's perception . Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1988) also stated that service quality is different levels between consumers' expectations for service and their perception of the outcome of the service. According to Lehtinen (1982) defined that service quality must be assessed on two aspects: the process of service delivery and outcome of services. Cronin and Taylor (1992) stated that service quality is defined as a long-term attitude from specific service meets. Gronroos (1984) also suggested about two areas of service quality are the technical quality and functional quality. Technical quality (outcome) related to what customer received.

Technical quality can be measured by the consumer in a objective way. Functional quality (process) means how a technical service is received by the customer. Functional quality concerns the psychological contact between the buyer and the seller, so it is in a very subjective way and includes elements such as attitudes and behavior of employees; accessibility of service; appearance and personality of employees; the relationship between employees, and the relationship between employees and customers the staff.

Because of the abstract nature of the quality service as well as diversity of it, so in the period from 1984 to 2003, there were 19 models assessed about service quality have been published (Seth, Deshmukh & Vrat, 2005). Researchers have split these models in two schools: the school of Northern Europe (Nordic) represented Gronroos and the school of America (Parasuraman *et al.*)(Brady & Cronin, 2001). In general, the models explained that service quality is customer perception during service process from approach, execution to final product service results.

b. Service quality in public sector

The approach of the study comes from the opinion: citizens are as "customers" and state administrative organizations are the "services providers" in order to improve the quality of public administration services in HCMC better.

Hsiao & Lin (2008) wrote that public sectors have been established to serve people, therefore service quality it provides is determined by people's satisfaction or citizen's experience, in the context of demand of many different people, administrative service organizations can satisfy people just by innovation as well as improvement of service quality. It is clear that, the operation of administrative public organization is to implement public power by law and regulations.

Service is an activity belongs to functions and duties of the state administrative apparatus, is implemented by the State administrative agencies directly or authorized organizations to perform under the supervision of state in order to meet needs of society and people.

Public administrative service is defined as services related to law enforcement activities, not for profit purposes, is implemented by state agencies (or organizations or enterprises authorized)

supply for organizations and individuals in the form of the legal documents in fields where state agencies manage (Decree 64 / 2007ND-CP dated 10/4/2007 of the Vietnamese Government)

Service quality of public administration is not out of the general characteristics of service quality mentioned above. The current management climate as well as and the related pressure for innovations in the public sector have caused for many public organizations with significant pressures on both internal and external fields (Boyne, 2003; Drennan, McConnell & Stark, 2014; Eakin *et al.*, 2011). Nowadays, public organizations have to prove that they have the ability to improve their performance as well as attain the goals and objectives of the organization (Chatzoglou, Chatzoudes, Vraimaki & Diamantidis, 2013). Thus, effective performance management approaches are developed and are applied seem compulsory (Anderson and Klaassen, 2012; Lin and Lee, 2011).

2.1.2 Transparency in public sector

a. Transparency

Transparency as physical construction brings symbolic power. So, transparency is thing which government, business, and public organizations should be conducted (Heald, 2006). The Nolan Committee in the United Kingdom in 1995 (cited by Heald, 2006) established the Seven Principles of Public Life, which it should apply to all service in the public sector: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, openness, accountability, honesty, and leadership. Of these, openness factor is closest to transparency. Nolan stated that managers in the public sector should be as open as possible about all the actions and decisions that they take. Thus, the concept of openness was used as transparency in different governmental actions in the middle of the 1990s. After that the concept of transparency is used more than the concept of openness in both the popular and scientific debate. Next, this concept extensive used in accounting field and political science (Ahlberg & Jonnergard, 2014).

According to Fairbanks, Plowman & Rawlins (2007) researches in the various fields both private sector and public sector also affirmed that a mean for increasing reliability of an organization is the practice of transparency in their organization. Additionally, Tapscott & Ticoll (cited by Dos Santos *et al.*, 2014) stated that the concept of transparency likes “an old force with new power” and claims that organizations that ignore or fight it they will fail in their results. Richard W. Oliver (cited by Ginsberg *et al.*, 2012) wrote in his book *What is Transparency* that transparency has come to mean “active

revelation". Nguyen (2013) wrote that transparency is a historical concept. Its birth, development is a prerequisite of democracy in the activities of human society. Transparency is always used as an effective measure to prevent and combat the negative behavior in organizations, especially public power organizations.

The law on prevention of corruption of Vietnam 2005 define that transparency is thing that agencies, organizations and units announce, provide official information on documents, activities or certain content. The Law on prevention of corruption of Vietnam also stipulates that the agencies and units need to implement the principle of openness and transparency of policies, legislation and activities of their organization unless the contents confidential contents according to the law to ensure fair and democratic. The Law also specifies the forms of transparency including announcement at the meeting of the agency; post up in office of the agency; notice in writing to the agencies, organizations, units and individuals concerned; issuing publications; announcement on the mass media; post on website and provide information requested by the agency, organization or individual.

b. Transparency in public sector

Ljungholm (2015) wrote that transparency is a key in characteristic of accountable government. Transparency demands a significant transformation in political and administrative culture. According to Seyoum & Manyak (2009) transparency has often been related to the government activities and their institutions. The new public management also encourages government need inform adequately about the service which they receive from particular providers (Mulgan, 2012). According to Transparency International (cited by Mulgan, 2012) transparency is almost connected with an absence of corruption. At a basic level, transparency is seen as an necessary factor to keep governments honest and to reduce the scope of government corruption. Therefore, Seyoum & Manyak (2009) stated that transparency in the public sector is often associated with the degree of corruption and bribery, bureaucratic and enforcement of law.

According to the Federal Institute for public access to information in Mexico (cited by Dos Santos at el, 2014), transparency of government can be determined by three factors: the openness of government information; communication or sharing of knowledge to citizens; and the report the

government's decision to citizens. Ginsberg *et al.* (2012) stated that scholars have defined government transparency as the announcement of present policy choices. The Sunlight Foundation, a nonprofit organization (cited by Ginsberg *et al.*, 2012) did not recommend a specific definition of transparency, but gave principles as government transparency. This principles are called commitments about access to government information by making it available online. They are: completeness, preeminence, timeliness, ease of access, readability, non-discrimination, use of commonly standards, permanence, licensing and usage costs.

Additionally, Veal *et al.* (2015) affirmed that transparency in the public sector including transparency of the inner workings - its processes, budgets, procedures, plans, and decision making strategies. Veal *et al.* (2015) also stated that people can see and observe what is inside a container when it is transparent. Likewise, citizens and other observers can see its inner workings when a government is transparent. In a transparent government, citizens and business leaders can get the information which help them to understand how important decisions affecting their well-being are made. According to Ginsberg *et al.* (2012) transparency includes not only the revelation of government information, but also the approach, understanding, and use of this information by people.

2.1.3. Customer satisfaction in public sector

a. Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a very widespread concept and is established in several sciences. In marketing field and consumer research, customer satisfaction concept has been used to describe differences between alternatives and brands. Experts in economy field have used customer satisfaction concept as a common denominator to illustrate differences between product groups and industries (Andreassen, 1994). Organizations can provide to customer the best services with their maximum ability. However, if customers do not realize that those service are of quality, all in worthless (Anthony, 2014). Thus, it is necessary for service providers to recognize how the customer can feel highly enthusiastic with their service quality. In other words, service providers need understand how to satisfy customer as well as the factors affecting customer satisfaction in order to gain the growth and market share.

Hansemark and Albinsson (2004) defined that satisfaction is a general customer attitude towards a service supplier, or a customer evaluation of the difference between what customers expect and what they receive, regarding the implementation of some need, objective or desire. According to Lin (2003), customer satisfaction is the result of perception and cognition, where standards are compared to the perceived performance. If the perceived performance is lower service expectations, customers are not satisfied. On the contrary, if perceived performance surpasses expectations, the customer will be satisfied. It can be seen that an organization becomes success or failure this depends on whether consumers are satisfied or not. That is why Wu (2011) affirmed that satisfied customers are the messengers for an organization because their satisfaction can spread by word of mouth to many people, which help organizations have more consumers. Besides that, Yi (cited by Andreassen, 1994) defined that customer satisfaction as a function of service quality and expectations.

b. Customer satisfaction in public sector

Customer satisfaction is recognized as one of the most important factors of modern marketing, especially for the service sector (Bejou, Ennew & Palmer, 1998). When considering the satisfaction of the people for public administration services, many studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between trust of citizen with the Government and citizen satisfaction with provided services by government (Van de Walle, & Bouckaert, 2003).

According to Almarshad (2015) citizen satisfaction can be used to measure performance of institution and help local government can respond to demands of local people. Abdullah & Kalianan (2009) wrote that the government-citizen is needed to put service quality within a frame of political and social values. The government-citizen model should profit from the producer-customer model and not be replaced. Thus, Abdullah & Kalianan (2009) also stated that wrote citizen satisfaction is not only customer satisfaction, but also is sign of local government quality. In Vietnam, according to Nguyen & Quan (2015) defined that customer satisfaction in the public sector as the needs and expectations of citizens are met by the supply services of State administrative organizations.

2.2 The models for measuring service quality

2.2.1 Gronroos's Service Quality Model

The early study of service quality is formed by Gronross (1984). Gronross stated that an organization wants to become successful, it is vital for an organization to understand the attitude of customer on the service provided. In this model, service quality is assessed by comparison of expected quality and perceived quality. To measure the service quality, Gronross suggested three dimensions: technical quality, functional quality and image. The technical quality describes what is provided service and perceived quality. Functional quality describes how receives technical service by customer. Image is the view's customer of product's brand. The image is an important factor and is built up by the technical quality and functional quality. Besides that, other less important factors can affect image including tradition, advertising, pricing and word-of-mouth.

Ghotbabadi, Feiz & Baharun (2015) wrote that it was the first effort to introduce a model for measuring service quality. However, the main problem is this model did not explain how to measure technical quality and functional quality. In the years after, this model is refined by Rust & Oliver in 1994 (Ghotbabadi, Feiz & Baharun, 2015). They added more dimension to Gronross model is service environment. So, Rust & Oliver offers a model including three components the service product (technical quality), the service delivery (functional quality) and the service environment. However, according to Ghotbabadi, Feiz & Baharun (2015) Rust & Oliver did not test their model and a few supports have been found for using.

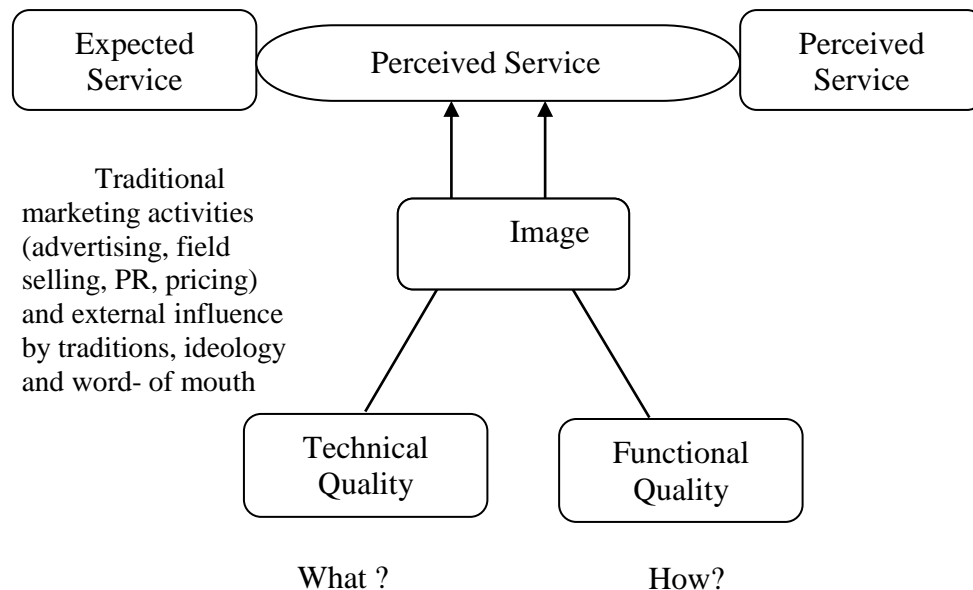


Figure 1: The Gronroos's service quality model. Source: (Gronroos, 1984)

2.2.2 SERVQUAL and GAP model

The SERVQUAL is developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985). This development is based on disconfirmation model. In this study, they found that there are five gaps between perceived service and expected service. The Figure 2 shows the construction of theory by using the gap analysis for service quality. Five gaps and relationship between them as follows:

Gap 1: The gap between consumer expectations and management perceptions; the service supplier do not recognize what the expectations of the consumer about service;

Gap 2: The gap between management perceptions and service quality specifications; the service supplier do not know the standard of service that consumer expectation;

Gap 3: The gap between service quality specifications and service delivery;

Gap 4: The gap between service delivery and external communications;

Gap 5: The gap between customer expectation and consumer perception of the service. Gap 5 depends on four gaps which related with delivery of service quality on marketer side.

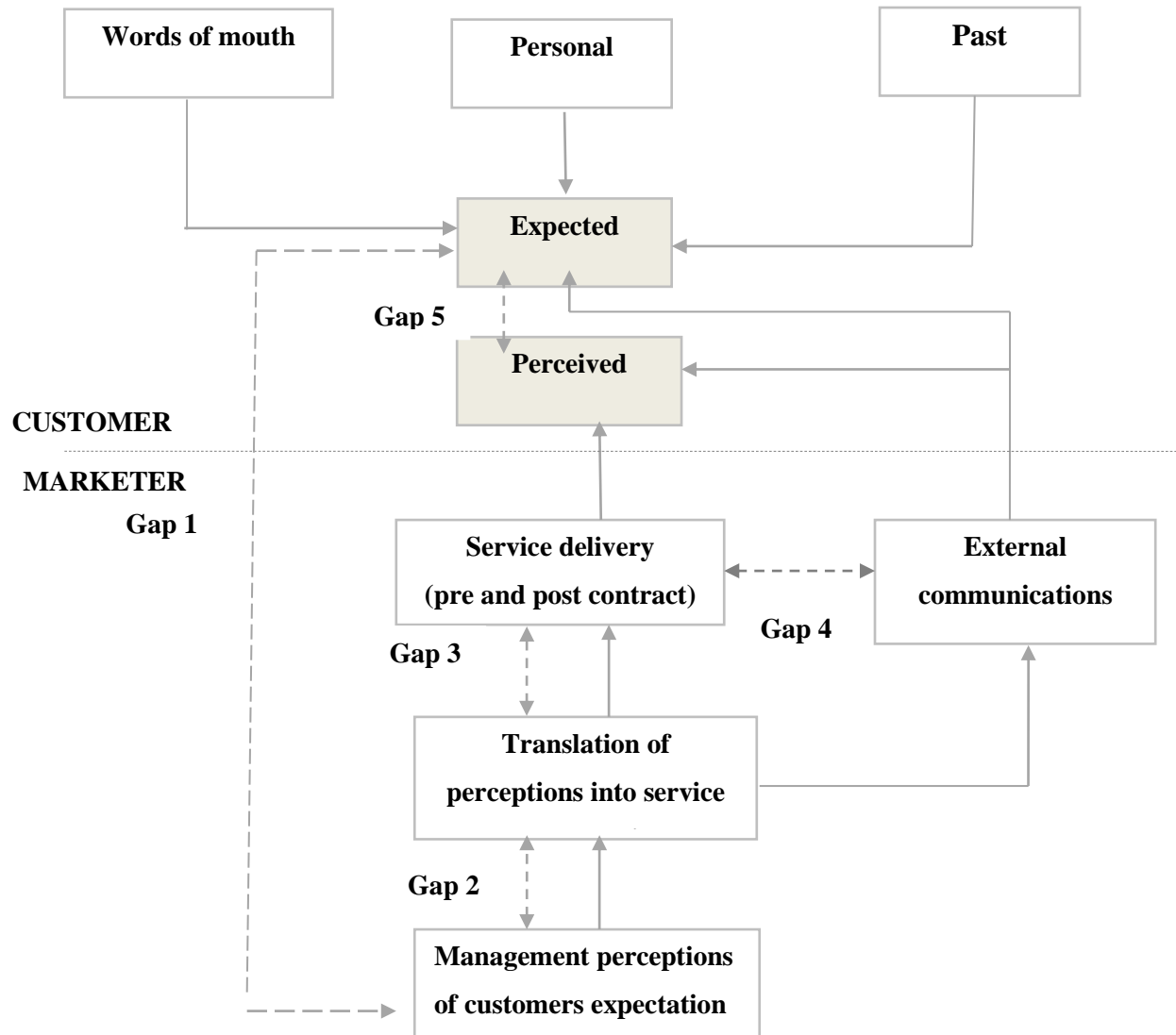


Figure 2: The Gap Model of Service Quality. Source: (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985).

Based on the fifth gap between customer expectation about service and perceptions of the customers, Parasuraman *et al.*, (1985) recommended functional quality dimension for measuring the gaps with 10 components: reliability, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, access, communication, security, credibility, understanding, and tangibles. In 1988 Parasuraman *et al.* restructured their model and theory with the dimensions decreased into five including reliability, responsiveness, assurance

(which contains competence, credibility, communication, security and courtesy), tangibles and empathy (which contains understanding and access). They named this model as SERVQUAL (Figure 3).

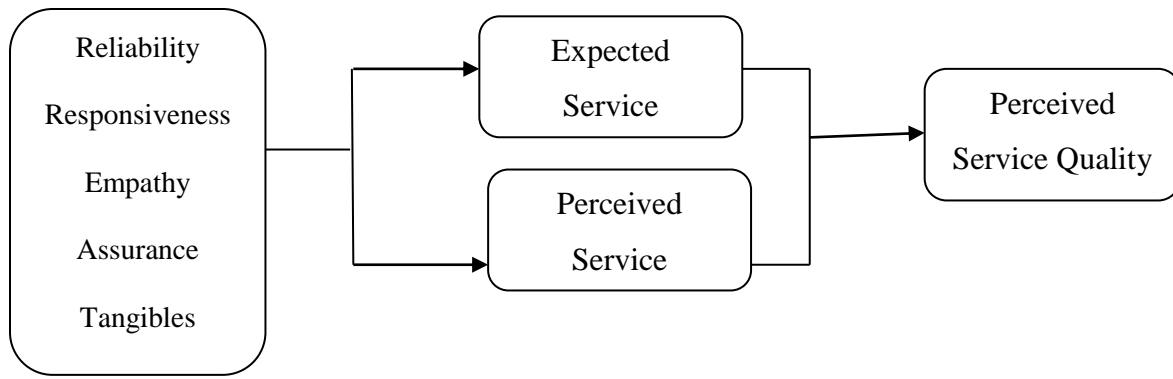


Figure 3: SERVQUAL model. Source: (Parasuraman *et al.*, cited by Ghotbabadi, Feiz & Baharun, 2015)

2.2.3 SERVPERF

Dabholkar, Thorp, & Rentz (cited by Ghotbabadi, Feiz & Baharun, 2015) affirmed that SERVQUAL model is good for some industries measurement. However, this model is not appropriate for some areas such as the retail store environment. In the literature, there are more debates continue today among scientists about this model. They believed that SERVQUAL model is inadequate, not comprehensive into different application, especially apply in new industries (Brady & Cronin, 2001). In 1992, Cronin and Taylor suggested that this model need to refine by considering performance (perceived service) is an only factor is measured for service quality. They stated that service quality can define as attitude of consumers and using service performance (perceived service) was the measurement of service quality. They said that the model SERVQUAL of Parasuraman *et al.* causes easily confusing between customer satisfaction and customer attitudes. Investigating the relationship of quality service with consumer satisfaction and purchase intention of the consumer was their research; they believe that service quality is a precursor of consumer satisfaction.

Based on SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman et al (1985), Cronin and Taylor (1992) developed a new model in order to measure service quality called SERVPERF with using performance as measurement for quality service. In this new model, Cronin and Taylor (1992) conducted to measure

the performance with the same dimensions including tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy for measurement of service quality. Accordingly to SERVPERF model, service quality is assessed through customer perception instead customer expectations.

2.2.4 Service quality measurement in the public sector

Since quality of service is widely accepted that it is one of the foundations for obtaining success of any organization, a method of service quality measurement should be available. Measurement plays a vital important role because results of measurement help organizations have innovations after comparing before and after measurements. They can improve regarding quality and provide service standards clearer (Diewert, 2011; Brysland and Curry, 2001). Thus, there has been many considerable research attention of service quality in the public sector in the last decades (Donnelly, Kerr, Rimmer & Shiu, 2006).

Although there has been a lack of consensus in the literature, the SERVQUAL is used in service quality measurement widely and successfully to date (Kassim & Abdullah, 2010). Parasuraman *et al.* (1985, 1988) stated that, with minor modifications, SERVQUAL model can apply to any service organization (with private and public). Various recent studies both private and public sector (Pansiri & Mmereki, 2010; Saraei & Amini, 2012; Bose & Gupta, 2013; Arambewela & Hall, 2006; Rhee and Rha, 2009) continues to use this model without serious adjustments. Moreover, it is clear from up to date research (Wisniewski, 2001; Agus *et al.*, 2007; Rhee and Rha, 2009, Chatzoglou, Chatzoudes, Vraimaki, & Diamantidis, 2013) that SERVQUAL instrument can be successfully adapted in the public sector when SERVQUAL is appropriately tailored to fit the related context.

Additionally, in Vietnam according to Nguyen & Le (2010), criteria system for evaluating public administration services must reflect the factors: objectives of state administrative agencies; input elements; criteria for handling work for the people; criteria reflect output and criteria for evaluation of the output results. In other words, administrative services are the process of converting input elements (requirements, people expectations) to output elements (people satisfaction). To clarify, Nguyen & Le (2010) also suggested that input elements including physical facilities, technology, attitude of civil servants, customer expectations; criteria for handling work for the people including democratic and fair, transparency, reliability, readiness to help people, friendly behavior and sympathy; criteria reflect

the output of administrative services including handling work on time, accuracy in document to the people; and criteria for evaluating output result is customer satisfaction.

Based on these views, the SERVQUAL instrument can apply to study service quality in the public sector in Vietnam.

2.3 Hypothesis development and Research framework

2.3.1. Service quality and customer satisfaction in public sector

As mention above, in the public sector, service quality is measured by 5 dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy (Agus, Barker & Kandampully, 2007; Chatzoglou, Chatzoudes, Vraimaki, & Diamantidis, 2013). They include as follows:

Firstly, the tangibles measure the appearance of physical facilities of the service, such as the decoration, ambience, technology; equipment and personnel that are considered as contributing to a civil servant ability to provide a service desired level;

Secondly, the reliability measures the civil servant ability to perform the promised services accurately and dependably;

Thirdly, the responsiveness measure the civil servant willingness to help citizens and provide service quickly;

Fourthly, the assurance includes the level of knowledge and politeness of civil servant and their ability to make confidence and belief

Fifthly, the empathy measure the citizens individualized attention about the service offered and the civil servant makes an effort to understand citizens and identify their needs (Agus, Barker & Kandampully, 2007; Chatzoglou, Chatzoudes, Vraimaki, & Diamantidis, 2013).

In the literature reviewed, many studies has shown that service quality is strongly related with customer satisfaction (Dehghan, Zenouzi, & Albadvi, 2012; Rahman, Khan, & Haque, 2012; Kumar, Smart, Maddern, & Maull, 2008,). They affirmed that the service quality plays a main role on customer satisfaction.

Moreover, in public sector, the research result of Agus, Barker & Kandampully (2007) indicated that there is a significant influence between service quality and citizen satisfaction. The result

also showed that employees in term of responsibility, assurance (elements constitute service quality) played an important role in improving citizen satisfaction which will be examined in this study.

In addition, the study of Anthony Sumnaya Kumasey (2014) also found that service quality significant and positively related with citizen satisfaction in the Ghanaian public service. Furthermore , in the study, namely "the Mediating Role of Citizen Satisfaction in the Relationship between Service Quality and Relationship Quality: The Case of Performance Measurement System Design in Indonesia Local Government", Zaitul *et al* (2014) discovered that service quality has a significant relationship with citizen satisfaction.

Based on views above and argument evidences, the following hypothesis is proposed

H1: Service quality positively influences with citizen satisfaction.

2.3.2 Transparency and customer satisfaction in public sector

In recent times, relationship transparency has been recommended as a potential factor brings advantages in business markets (Bliemel & Eggert, 1998). They emphasized that relationship transparency contributes relationship of satisfaction and trust of customers. According to Eggert & Helm (2000) stated that with transparency in company, customers have information clearly. Relationship transparency is expected to bring value to the customer as well satisfaction because this minimizes search for information and find a market for better alternatives.

In addition, Ljungholm (2015) affirmed that in the public sector, the functions of transparency are important elements in schemes of diminishing corruption and enhancing citizen satisfaction. Ljungholm (2015) also stated that reforms of transparency and public-involvement may give advantage both governments and the citizens.

In the literature reviewed, Park & Blenkinsopp (2011) concluded that transparency affects citizen satisfaction. Transparency makes significant increase in citizen satisfaction in the study, namely "the roles of transparency and trust in the relationship between corruption and citizen satisfaction".

Furthermore, the research result of the Đam, Đo and Pham indicated that elements of transparency affect people satisfaction when they research the taxpayer satisfaction for the service quality of tax departments Da nang District, Tuyen Quang Province, Vietnam.

Base on views above, the next hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Transparency positively affects citizen satisfaction

The purpose of this exploratory study is to examine the effects of service quality as well as transparency on citizen satisfaction in HCMC. Therefore, the research model was developed as follows:

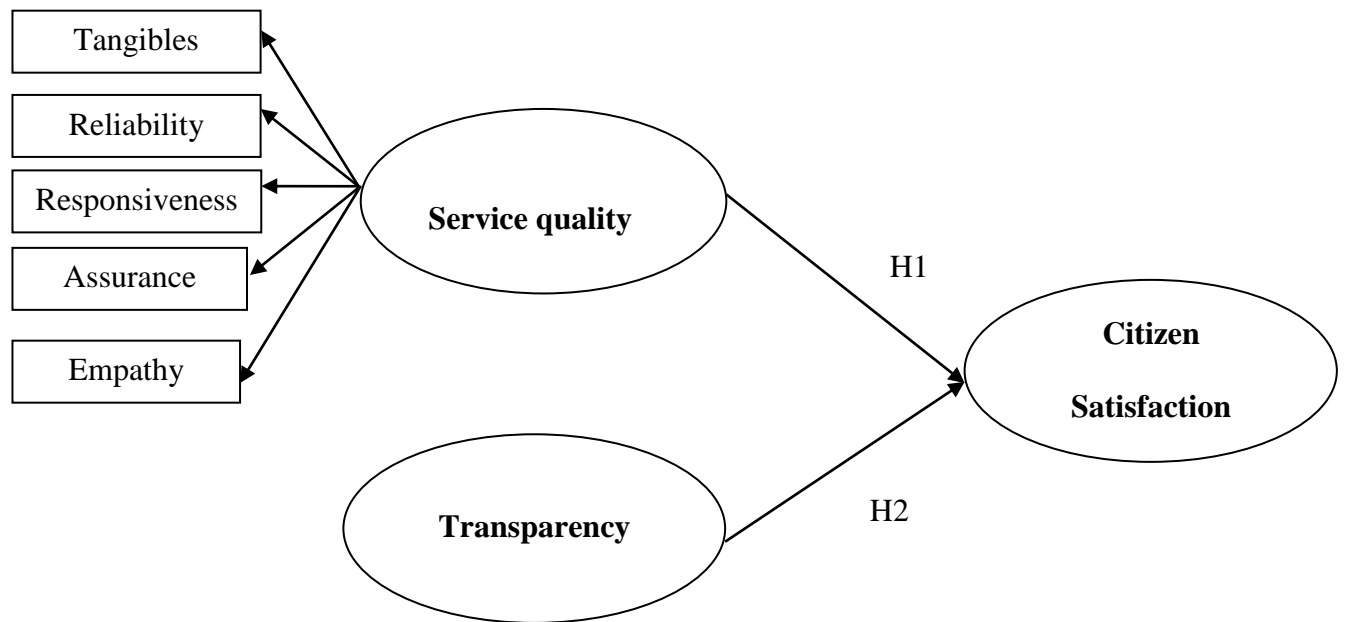


Figure 4: Research model of citizen satisfaction in Ho Chi Minh City

Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research procedure:

The research process is conducted in two steps:

- Qualitative study: The qualitative study was conducted as follows:

Based on measuring scale of Items of the Service Quality (22 questions), Transparency (4 questions), Customer satisfaction (3 questions), the questionnaire including 29 questions was translated from English into Vietnamese to distribute to respondents. This questionnaire in-depth interviewed to fill in with 12 citizens who perform administrative transactions in the People's Committees of Govap District. Continue discuss group. The purpose of these direct interviews and group discussion to find out concepts and attributes that affect citizen satisfaction. Besides that, qualitative study also tests the respondents who can understand to answer the questionnaire or not and format of the questionnaire. The result of this qualitative phase is that the questionnaire was clear and understandable. It took 5 minutes to answer and no more adjustment needed.

- Main study: The main study with quantitative method is conducted after official questionnaire completed. The data collected by interviewing citizens who have been using public administrative services in People's Committee of District 1, People's Committee of Govap District, HCMC.

The research process is illustrated in the Figure 5.

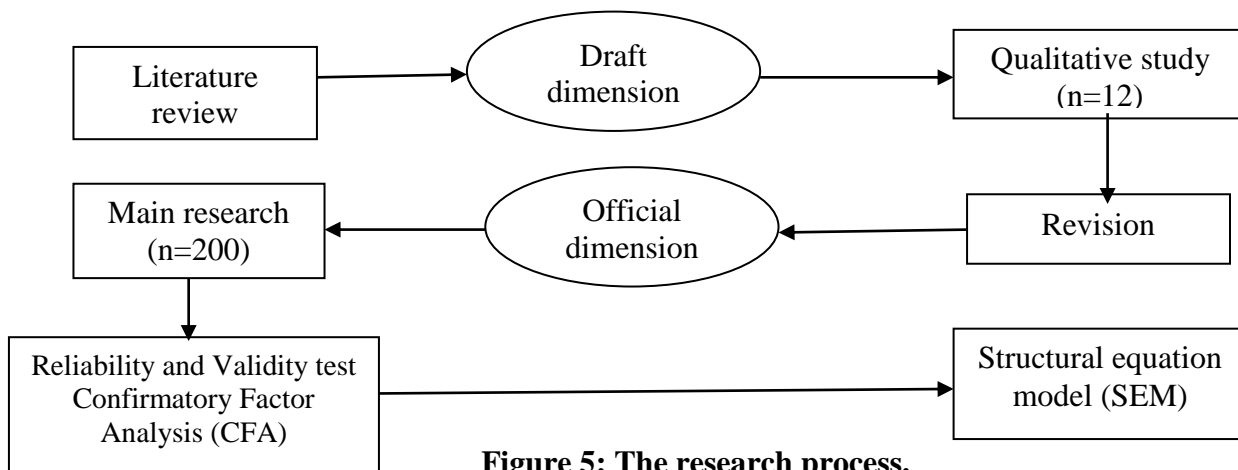


Figure 5: The research process.

3.2 Measurement scales

All variables in the model are measured by multiple-items measurement scales. The author applied the five-point Likert scale with the response range from "Strongly disagree=1" to "Strongly agree=5".

In this study:

- Service quality is measured by The SERVQUAL model developed in public sector by Chatzoglou, Chatzoudes, Vraimaki & Diamantidis (2013);
- Transparency is deduced from the research result of the Đam, Đo & Pham (2014);
- The customer satisfaction is based on the scales of the people satisfaction deducting developed by Nguyen & Quan (2015).

The list of items is summarized below:

Table 1: List of items of the Service quality and the Citizen satisfaction

No	ITEM LABEL	DESCRIPTION	Author
SERVICE QUALITY - Tangibles			
1	TAN01	Public administrative organizations in HCMC have up-to-date technology equipment.	Chatzoglou, Chatzoudes, Vraimaki & Diamantidis (2013)
2	TAN02	Public administrative organizations' physical facilities in HCMC are visually appealing.	
3	TAN03	Civil servants are well dressed and appear neat.	
4	TAN04	The physical facility is equipped in accordance with the type of service provided.	
SERVICE QUALITY - Reliability			
5	REL01	When public administrative organizations in HCMC promise to do something by a certain time, it does so.	Chatzoglou,
6	REL02	When citizens have a problem, public administrative	

		organizations in HCMC show a sincere interest in solving it.	Chatzoudes, Vraimaki & Diamantidis (2013)
7	REL03	Public administrative organizations in HCMC are organization people can depend on.	
8	REL04	Public administrative organizations in HCMC provide its services at the time it promises to do so.	
9	REL05	Public administrative organizations in HCMC keep their records accurately.	
SERVICE QUALITY - Responsiveness			
10	RES01	Public administrative organizations in HCMC tell citizens exactly when services will be performed.	Chatzoglou, Chatzoudes, Vraimaki & Diamantidis (2013)
11	RES02	Public administrative organizations' civil servants in HCMC give prompt service to citizens.	
12	RES03	Public administrative organizations' civil servants in HCMC are always willing to help citizens.	
13	RES04	Public administrative organizations' civil servants in HCMC are never too busy to respond to citizen request.	
SERVICE QUALITY - Assurance			
14	ASS01	The behavior of civil servants in HCMC encourages trust in citizens	Chatzoglou, Chatzoudes, Vraimaki & Diamantidis (2013)
15	ASS02	Citizens feel safe in their transaction with civil servants in HCMC	
16	ASS03	Civil servants in HCMC are consistently polite with citizens	
17	ASS04	Civil servants in HCMC have the knowledge to do their job well	
SERVICE QUALITY - Empathy			
18	EMP01	Public administrative organizations in HCMC give	

		citizens individual attention.	Chatzoglou, Chatzoudes, Vraimaki & Diamantidis (2013)
19	EMP02	Public administrative organizations in HCMC have operating hours convenient to all citizens	
20	EMP03	Civil servants in HCMC provide personal attention to each citizen.	
21	EMP04	Public administrative organizations in HCMC have the citizen's best interest at heart.	
22	EMP05	Civil servants in HCMC understand the specific needs of citizens.	
TRANSPARENCY			
23	OP01	Rules, procedures of administrative formalities are well posted up at the head offices.	Đam, Đo & Pham (2014)
24	OP02	Time for receiving and returning document results is well posted at where implements administrative procedures in the HCMC public administrative organizations.	
25	OP03	The legal documents relating to the administrative settlement are posted at where implements administrative procedures in HCMC the public administrative organizations.	
26	OP04	Civil servants in HCHC wear card of name and title at work.	
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION			
27	CS01	Satisfied with the service attitude of civil servants at public administrative organizations in HCMC.	Nguyen & Quan (2015)
28	CS02	Satisfied with tangibles of public administrative organizations in HCMC.	
29	CS03	Satisfied with the job done at public administrative organizations in HCMC.	

3.3 Sample and data analysis

3.3.1 Sample

Subjects of research are citizens above 18-year-old-age living in HCMC and have experience on using public administrative services at the People's Committee of District 1, People's Committee of Govap District.

According to the researchers, sample size is as large as possible (Nguyễn, 2011). Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Balack (1998) the factor analysis need sample size at least five times of observed variables. The number of observed variables in the research model is 29. So the sample size needs at least $29 \times 5 = 145$ responses.

Administrative organizations in Ho Chi Minh City include 24 districts and are located in the rural and urban area. Therefore, the representative sample was collected in terms of geographic dissemination including urban area (People's Committee of District 1), rural area (People's Committee of Go Vap Distrist). To complete sample sizes at least as 145 responses. In fact, survey of 240 questionnaires was issued at People's Committee of District 1 with 120 questionnaires; People's Committee of Govap with 120 questionnaires;

To collect the data, the survey was conducted at Govap Distrist with issued 120 questionnaire including 60 questionnaires were delivered to citizens when they went to The Department of Reception and Result Return at the People's Committee of District Govap by civil servants and 60 questionnaires were delivered similarly at the People's Committee of Ward 6, Govap District. This questionnaires were filled in by citizens before exiting. The response rate for this survey was 87%.

For the survey at Distrist 1 with issued 120 questionnaires was conducted similarly with 60 questionnaires at the People's Committee of District 1 and 60 questionnaires at the People's Committee of Ward Đakao, District 1. The response rate for this survey was 80%. Therefore, total 240

questionnaires is sent and 200 questionnaire are collected. The author collected 200 questionnaires from civil servants.

The study was conducted from November and December of 2015.

3.3.2 Data analysis method

Total 200 responses were used for data analysis. SPSS 20 and Amos 20 was used to test the model. In the first part, Cronbach's alpha tested the reliability for each measurement component separately. Considering the convergent and discriminated validity, the inappropriate items would be removed if necessity. In second part, the author ran Amos 20 for CFA and SEM with purpose of enhancing the value of the model. The CFA results would indicate the model fit if CMIN/DF was less than 3 with p-value larger than 5%, GFI, RFI, and CFI were larger than 0.9, and RMSEA was smaller than 10%. Based on composite reliability (CR), the author evaluated the measurement scale's reliability and used average variance extracted (AVE) to conclude the convergent validity and the correlation between items (r) to identify the discriminated validity. Then structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesized model and was applied to estimate path coefficients for each proposed relationship in the structural model.

3.3.3 Implementation plan

The qualitative study was started in 1st October 2015 and the master thesis completed in 15th March 2016. The detail item schedule is shown as following:

Table 2: The research time table

Activity

Year 2015 - 2016

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Qualitative study						
Main study						
Data analysis						
Research Report Preparation						
Master thesis preparation						
Thesis submission						

CHAPTER 4 – DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Descriptive statistics

4.1.1 Sample description

In the purpose of providing the general information of respondents, the SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was employed to analyze the collected data. The results of a descriptive statistic of data are summarized in following tables. The total number of respondents is 200 people.

In specific, the gender was reported with 99 (49.5%) female and 101 (50.5%) male and age group was 15.5%, 23%, 33.0% and 28.5% for 18-24; 25 – 30; 31 – 40 and above 40, respectively.

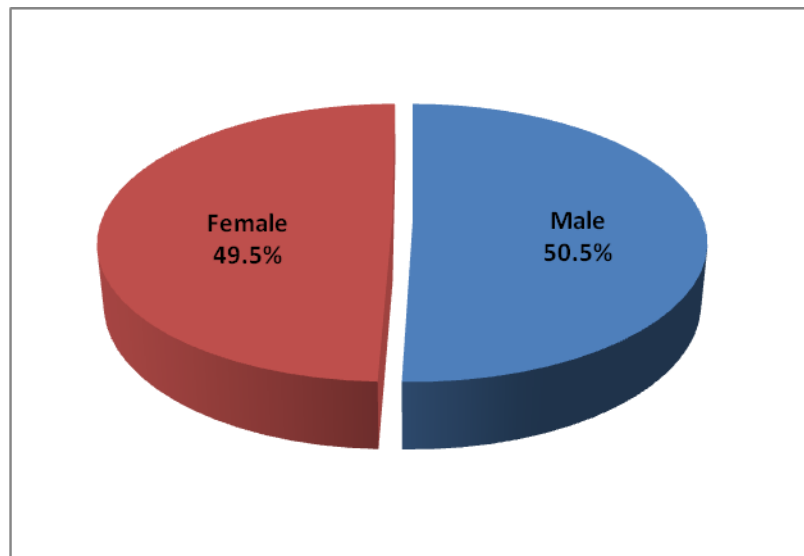


Figure 6: Gender of respondents

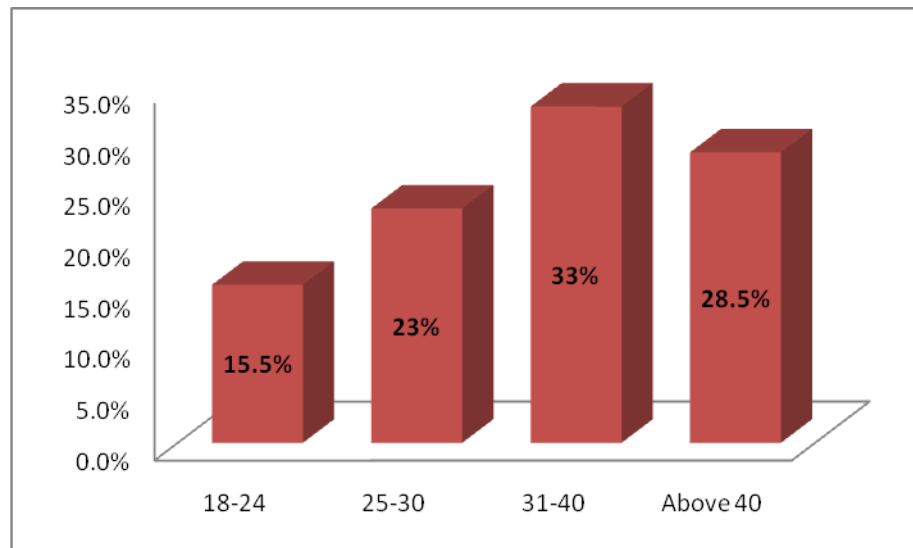


Figure 7: Age of respondents

Most respondents had good education level. Nearly half of the respondents had the College/Bachelor degree, reaching 41% of total sample. Respondents with Secondary school degree, High school degree, Junior College and Postgraduate accounted for 9.5%, 19.0%, 24.5% and 6.0% in that order.

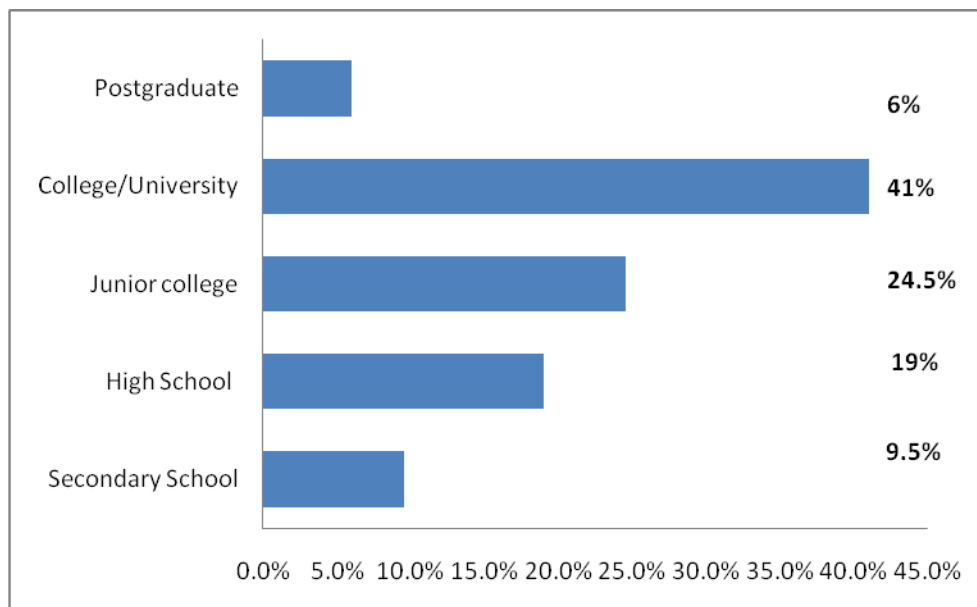


Figure 8: Education level of respondents

In terms of profession, office staff had the largest percentage with 40.5%; where student was 6.5%. The next was lecturer with 6.5%; and housewife was 9.5%. In addition, worker and other accounted for 14.0% and 23.0% in that order.

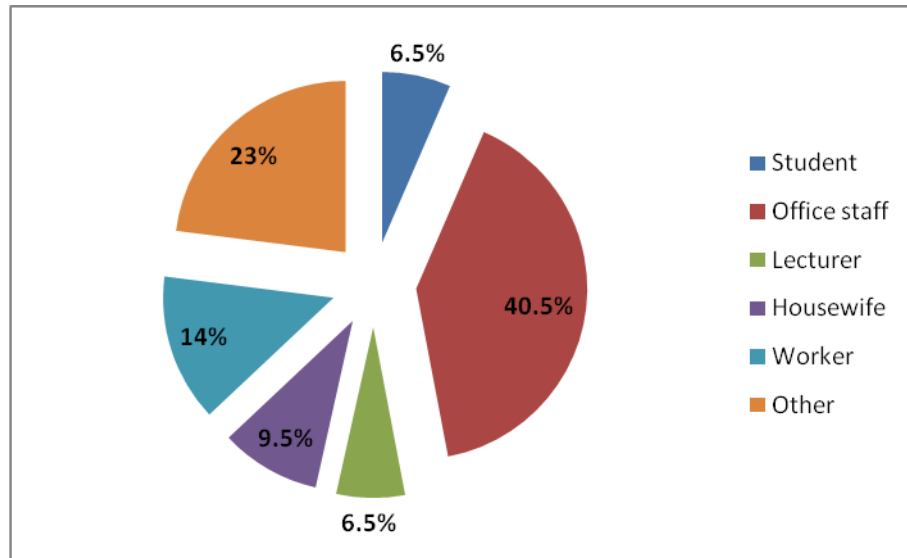


Figure 9: Profession of respondents

Income per month was investigated within four groups. Most respondents came from an income group of 3-5 million VND per month (33.5%). In the second place, group of above 7 million VND seized 29% of respondents. The next group is 6-7 million VND with 22.5%. The last portion with the lowest percentages (15.0%) was the respondents with the income fluctuated below 3 million VND per month.

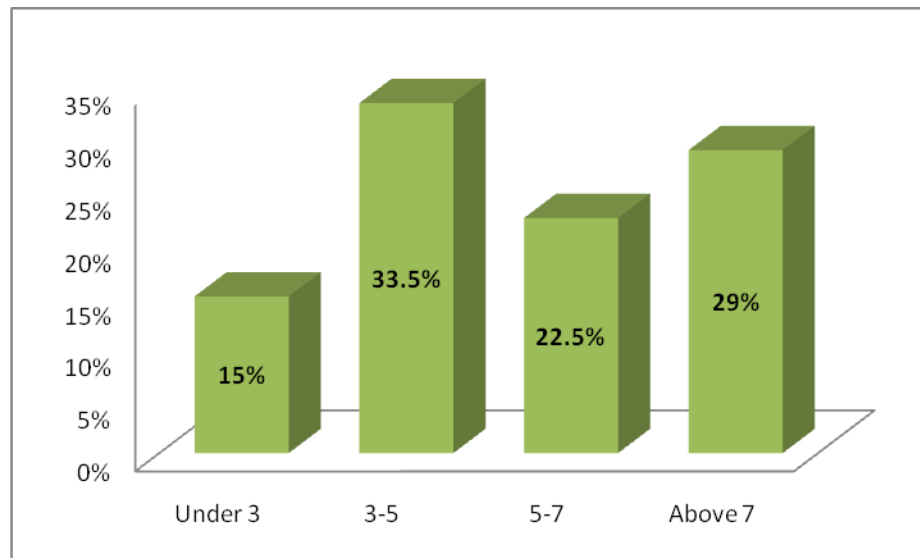


Figure 10: Income of respondents

4.1.2 Descriptive analysis

a. Service quality

Service quality is second-order construct measured by five dimensions including Tangibles (TAN), Reliability (REL), Responsiveness (RES), Assurance (ASS), Empathy (EMP), respectively.

Regarding to **Tangibles**, it is noted that appearance of civil servants is very important to citizen assessment, making the highest mean value ($M = 4.12$) and 88% agreement rating. It illustrates civil servants' appearance is the first impression to citizen who having transactions with public administrative organizations. With high disagreement rating (11%), physical facilities seems not enough appealing in such organizations, leading to lowest mean value ($M = 3.48$)

Table 3: Descriptive statistic for Tangibles

Coding	Frequencies (Number of respondents and percent rate among total)					Mean	Std. Deviation
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		
TAN1	11	10	63	100	15	3.56	.900
	5.5%	4%	26.5%	56.5%	7.5%		
TAN2	12	10	63	100	15	3.48	.929
	6%	5%	31.5%	50%	7.5%		
TAN3	2	1	21	124	52	4.12	.681
	1%	.5%	10.5%	62%	26%		
TAN4	10	6	56	99	29	3.66	.938
	5%	3%	28%	49.5 %	14.5 %		

Reliability is measured by five items, in which citizens expect to receive service at the time promised by Public administrative organizations in HCMC, illustrating by highest mean value ($M = 4.02$) as well as highest agreement rating (19.5%). It is shown public service is mostly resulted from punctuality of organization in general and servant in particular. Besides, it is noted that there is 0% disagreement rating toward organization's sincere interest in solving problem.

Table 4 : Descriptive statistic for Reliability

Coding	Frequencies (Number of respondents and percent rate among total)					Mean	Std. Deviation
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		
REL1	2	6	54	110	28	3.78	.758
	1%	3%	27%	55%	14%		
REL2	2	1	31	140	26	3.94	.627
	1%	.5%	15.5%	70%	13%		
REL3	2	0	36	131	31	3.94	.651
	1%	0%	18%	65.5%	15.5%		
REL4	1	7	18	135	39	4.02	.687
	5%	3.5%	9%	67.5%	19.5%		
REL5	0	5	36	125	34	3.94	.670
	0%	2.5%	18%	62.5%	17%		

The second dimension in Service quality is **Responsiveness** including four statements. Mean value of four items is along from 3.96 to 4.06. In which highest mean value show 82% respondents agree they receive exact time when service will be performed, leading to .5% disagree with this items. In this dimension, there is low disagreement rating, ranging from 0% to 1%.

Table 5: Descriptive statistic for Responsiveness

Coding	Frequencies (Number of respondents and percent rate among total)					Mean	Std. Deviation
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		
RES1	2	0	35	114	50	4.06	.685
	.5%	0%	17.5%	57%	25%		
RES2	1	2	30	123	44	4.04	.675
	.5%	1%	15%	61.5%	22%		
RES3	1	3	31	118	47	4.04	.704
	.5%	1.5%	15.5%	59%	23.5%		
RES4	1	2	35	127	35	3.96	.660
	.5%	1%	17.5%	63.5%	17.5%		

Relating the dimension of **Assurance**, the following table shows that the most important factor for respondents when evaluating service quality of civil servants is that having knowledge to do their job well. 96% of total respondents agreed with this statement, making the highest mean value of this group 4.10. Besides, the behavior of civil servants is also concerned as the factor to make citizen trust in them, making high mean value ($M = 4.08$) and 85% agreement rating.

Table 6: Descriptive statistic for Assurance

Coding	Frequencies (Number of respondents and percent rate among total)					Mean	Std. Deviation
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		
ASS1	2	1	27	119	51	4.08	.704
	1%	.5%	13.5%	59.5%	25.5%		
ASS2	2	0	23	132	43	4.07	.646
	1%	0%	11.5%	66%	21.5%		
ASS3	2	2	25	129	42	4.04	.683
	1%	1%	12.5%	64.5%	21%		
ASS4	3	0	14	141	42	4.10	.639
	1.5%	0%	7%	70.5%	21%		

According to the following table of **Empathy**, the most noticeable feature of descriptive analysis is that there were very low percentage of disagree for questions relating to direct contact between civil servant and citizens (2%). It means there is lack of personal attention to each citizen and understanding specific need of citizen (EMP3 AND EMP5). While over 87.5% of respondents agreed that working time of organization is convenient to them, there were only 1% disagreed with this statement.

Table 7: Descriptive statistic for Empathy

Coding	Frequencies (Number of respondents and percent rate among total)					Mean	Std. Deviation
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		
EMP1	2	5	44	138	11	3.76	.638
	1%	2.5%	22%	69%	5.5%		
EMP2	1	1	23	142	33	4.02	.588
	.5%	.5%	11.5%	71%	16.5%		
EMP3	0	4	38	123	35	3.94	.666
	0%	2%	19%	61.5%	17.5%		
EMP4	2	3	42	122	31	3.88	.610
	1%	1.5%	21%	61%	15.5%		
EMP5	2	2	48	121	27	3.84	.695
	1%	1%	24%	60.5%	13.5%		

b. Transparency

In term of Transparency, most of respondents agreed that time for receiving and returning document results is well posted at where implements administrative procedures is the most important dimension in this group with the highest mean value of 4.13. Looking at the low point of disagreement (.5%) it is somehow saying that the factor of posting legal documents is not well-done in such organization.

Table 8: Descriptive statistic for Transparency

Coding	Frequencies (Number of respondents and percent rate among total)					Mean	Std. Deviation
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		
OP1	1	1	21	135	42	4.08	.613
	.5%	.5%	10.5%	67.5%	21%		
OP2	2	1	13	137	47	4.13	.629
	1%	.5%	6.5%	68.5%	23.5%		
OP3	1	0	22	131	46	4.10	.613
	.5%	0%	11%	65.5%	23%		
OP4	2	8	21	119	50	4.04	.779
	1%	4%	10.5%	59.5%	25%		

c. Citizen satisfaction

In term of citizen satisfaction factor, most of respondents agreed that service attitude of civil servant is the most important factor in this group with the highest mean value of 4.06. Looking at the low point of agreement (9.5%) it is somehow saying that the factor of tangibles is not satisfied by most of respondents. There were more than 80% of total respondents said that job done is one of the important factors to them when evaluating service quality of public administrative organizations.

Table 9: Descriptive statistic for Citizen Satisfaction

Coding	Frequencies (Number of respondents and percent rate among total)					Mean	Std. Deviation
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		
CS1	2	2	21	131	44	4.06	.673
	1%	1%	10.5%	65.5%	22%		
CS2	14	3	37	127	19	3.67	.930
	7%	1.5%	18.5%	63.5%	9.5%		
CS3	1	2	27	132	38	4.02	.642
	.5%	1%	13.5%	66%	19%		

4.2 Reliability and Validity testing

The reliability analysis was conducted by calculating the Cronbach's α . The minimum proposed Cronbach's alpha is above 0.6, thus result of the three constructs exceeding the 0.6 threshold required. In table 10, the Cronbach's α coefficient of "service quality" is 0.936, that of "transparency" is 0.806, and "citizen satisfaction" is 0.836. Nevertheless, Tangibles dimension of Service quality was not satisfied Cronbachs' alpha (>0.6) and item CS2(0.118) of "citizen satisfaction" was not satisfied item-total correlations (>0.3). Thus, these items were eliminated from further analysis. The measurements of this study are acceptable in reliability.

Convergent validity of the measurement model was assessed by three measures: item reliability, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). Item reliability was evaluated by the size of the loadings of the measurement. The loading should be above 0.5, indicating each measure is making up 50 per cent or more of the variance. The result of factor loading was shown all items loaded strongly ($>.05$) on their appropriate factors which supported their unidimensionality.

Composite reliability was assessed on the basis of internal consistency. The internal consistency measure is similar to Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha that there are assumes parallel measures, and represents a lower bound of composite reliability. According to Molina et al., (2007), the minimum proposed composite reliability value is 0.70. The result of this criterion was satisfactory and reported in Table 10. To complete the analysis, the AVE was computed, in which the minimum suggested value is 0.5. Convergent validity is adequate when constructs have an AVE greater than 0.50, the variance shared with a construct and its measures is greater than the error. As shown in Table 10 all the constructs have an AVE score above 0.50. With factor loading of all items is higher than 0.5, CR above 0.7 and AVE greater than 0.5, the result implied the measurement was good.

Discriminant validity was assessed using two methods: correlation between constructs (r); and the comparison of the square root of the AVE for each construct with the correlation between the construct and other constructs in the model. Correlation between constructs in combination with standard error in table 11 indicated all of them are different from 1. In addition, Chin (1998) states that if the square root of the AVE for each construct is larger than the correlation between the construct and any other construct in the model, then the measures should be considered to have adequate discriminant validity. Table 12 shows all constructs in the estimated model satisfied this criterion. Since none of the off-diagonal elements exceeded the respective diagonal element, the criteria for discriminant validity were considered satisfied.

According to the above results, the reliability and validity in this study are acceptable.

Table 10: Convergent and discriminant validity of constructs

Indicators			Estimate	Criteria
Service quality				Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.9363$ CR = 0.923 AVE = 0.752
REL1	<---	Reliability	.680	
REL2	<---	Reliability	.766	
REL3	<---	Reliability	.778	
REL4	<---	Reliability	.678	
REL5	<---	Reliability	.579	
RES1	<---	Responsiveness	.632	
RES2	<---	Responsiveness	.806	
RES3	<---	Responsiveness	.884	
RES4	<---	Responsiveness	.763	
ASS1	<---	Assurance	.892	
ASS2	<---	Assurance	.784	
ASS3	<---	Assurance	.862	
ASS4	<---	Assurance	.835	
EMP1	<---	Empathy	.640	
EMP2	<---	Empathy	.564	
EMP3	<---	Empathy	.785	
EMP4	<---	Empathy	.785	
EMP5	<---	Empathy	.755	
Transparency				Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.806$ CR = 0.830 AVE = 0.652
OP1	<---	Transparency	.841	
OP2	<---	Transparency	.773	
OP3	<---	Transparency	.801	

OP4	<---	Transparency	.529	
Citizen Satisfaction				Cronbach's α = 0.836 CR = 0.838 AVE = 0.859
CS1	<---	Citizen Satisfaction	.893	
CS2	<---	Citizen Satisfaction	Eliminated	
CS3	<---	Citizen Satisfaction	.893	

Table 11: Correlation between constructs (r)

Correlation		r	se	p
Citizen Satisfaction <-->	Transparency	.612	.030	***
Citizen Satisfaction <-->	Service Quality	.890	.029	***
Transparency <-->	Service Quality	.747	.022	***

Table 12: Correlation among construct scores

	Citizen Satisfaction	Service	Transparency
Citizen Satisfaction	0.926		
Service Quality	0.890	0.867	
Transparency	0.612	0.747	0.807

Note: Square root of AVE in the diagonal and bold

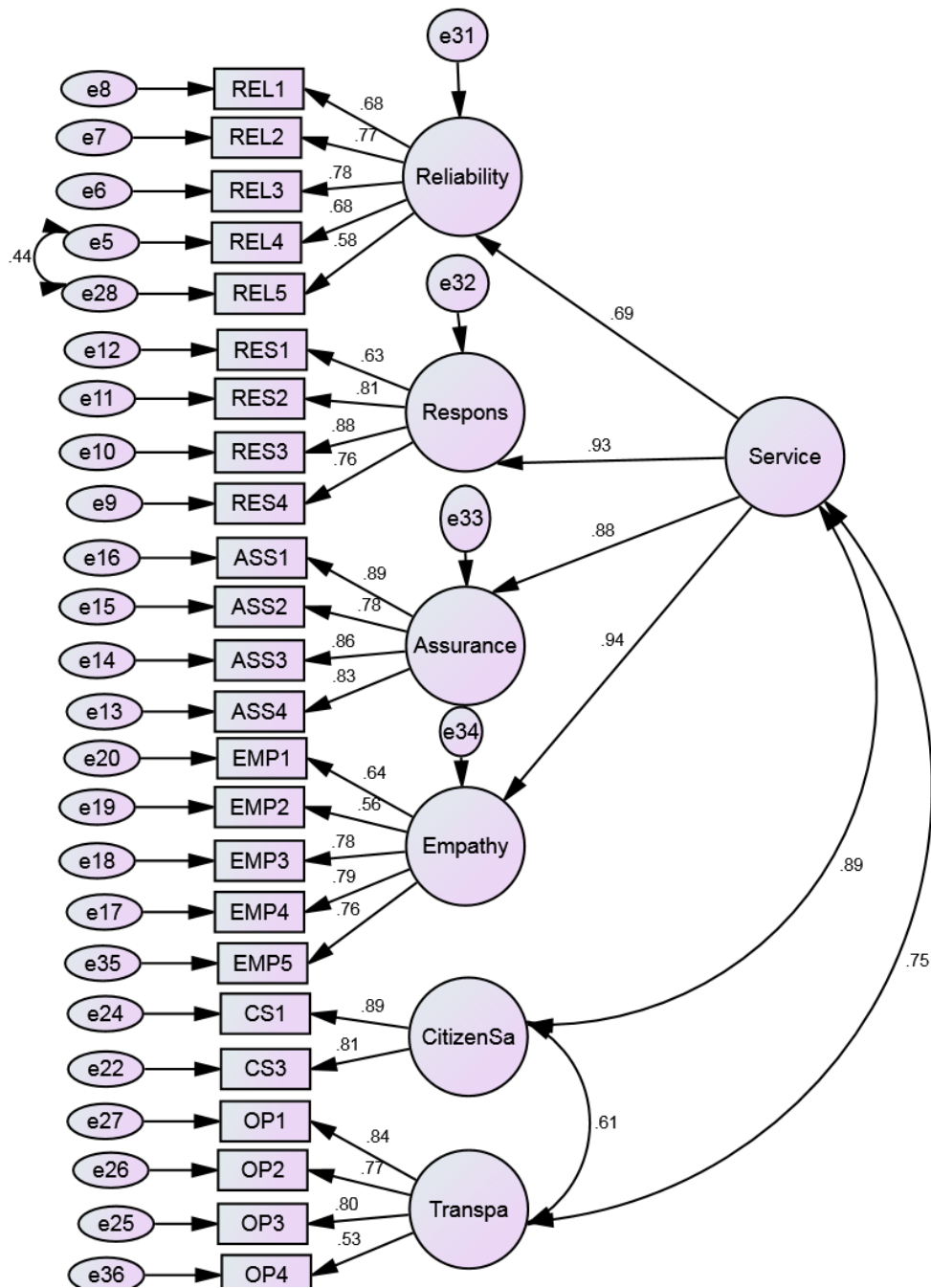
4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

According to Hair et al. (2009), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is statistic method used to test confirmation of research measurement theory. Measurement theory illustrates “how constructs are operationalized by sets of measured variables” in logic and system. It is noted that there is quite different between CFA and Exploratory Factors Analysis (EFA) which can be mentioned.

While in EFA, the number of construct must be explored after running data by software (statistical result), the set of variable as well as factor (construct) should be specified before data is computed by theory in CFA. It requires that the researcher spent a lot of effort on literature review to define construct and model firstly when using CFA. The purpose of using CFA is to provide for researcher how well the constructs in theoretical framework match the reality by actual or collected data. The result will confirm or reject the hypothesis previously introduced (measurement model) based on theory. Some criteria are used to evaluate whether the research model is fit in reality by collected data as following. Firstly, the model will be fit if Chi-square (CMIN/df) less than 3 and the goodness of fit index (GFI) is used to measure of fit between the hypothesized model and the observed covariance matrix. The GFI should be ranged from 0 to 1, and best under 0.9 indicating acceptable model fit. The comparative fit index (CFI) analyses the model fit by investigating the inconsistency between the collected data and the hypothesized model, while adjusting the issues of sample size inherence in the chi-squared test of model fit, and the normed fit index. A CFI value of 0.90 or larger is considered to illustrate acceptable model fit. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) avoided issues of sample size by analysing the inconsistency between the hypothesized model, with an optimally chosen parameter estimates, and the population covariance matrix. A value of 0.06 or less indicates an acceptable model fit in combination of PCLOSE higher than 0.5.

After removing items due to factor loading lower than 0.5, the rest of all the observed items which were significant and substantial (>0.50) were run as a whole for the final measurement model. The final measurement model had a good fit to the data: Chi-square = 653.132; df = 132; Chi-square/df = 2.677; P = .000; CFI = 0.881; RMSEA = 0.089.

Overall, the measurement model results supported for convergent and discriminant validities of the measures used in this research.

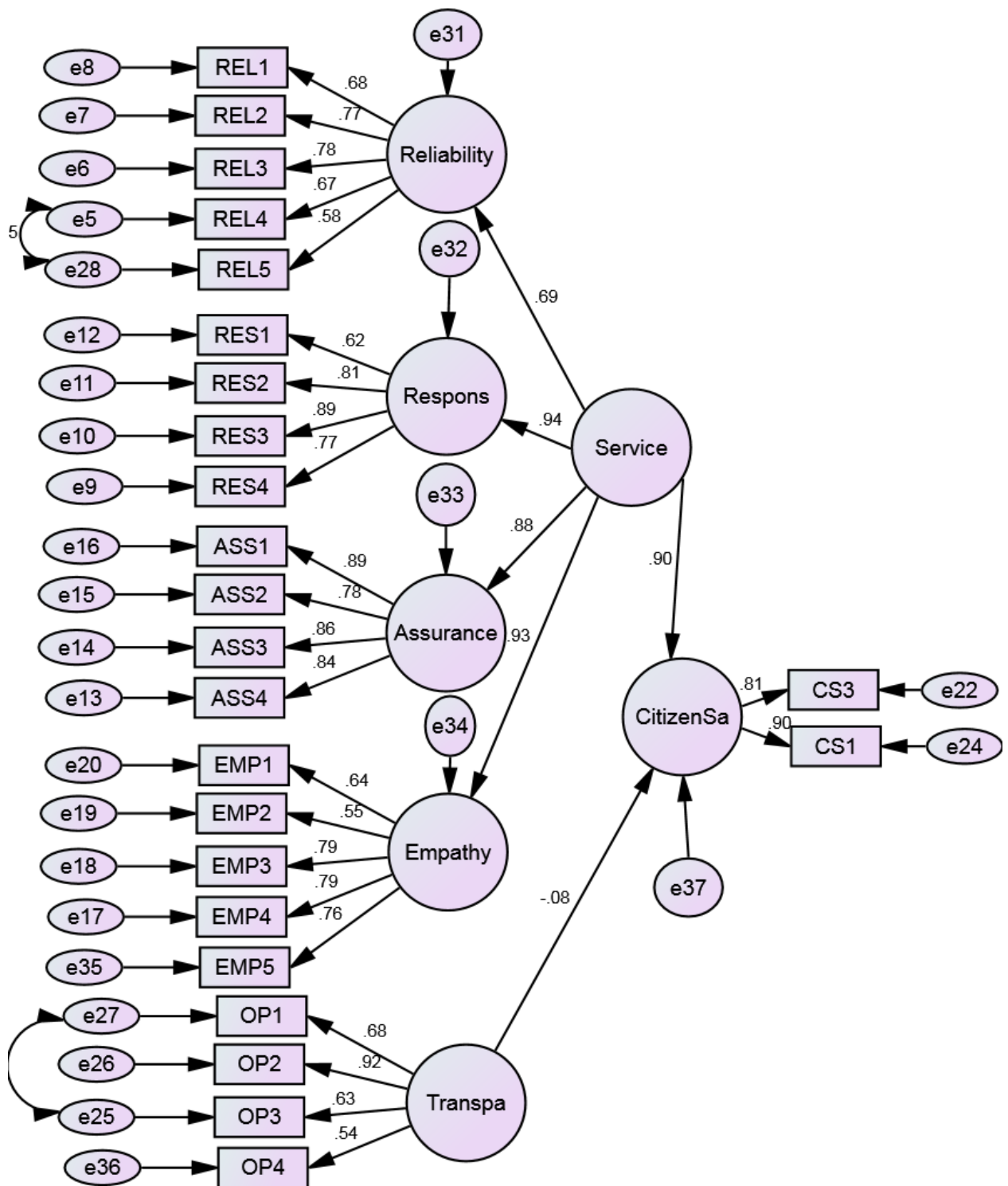


$\chi^2[132] = 653.132$ ($p = .000$); CMIN/df = 2.677; CFI = 0.881; RMSEA = 0.089

Figure 11: Final measurement model

4.4 Structural equation modeling (SEM)

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to test the structure model after running CFA and the measurement model was confirmed. SEM is combined by multivariate technique and multiple regressions and this statistical method is used to examine the set of interrelated relationship which was illustrated by the relation between variables and constructs and among latent constructs. It is noted that while other statistical methods can only address the single relationship (independent and dependent factor), SEM can examine the interrelated relationship at the same time, supporting the answer for questions relating to theory and management. SEM is final stage in analyzing data after CFA. The collected data is firstly tested and confirmed how constructs represented in model based on theory and then SEM is employed to examine the relationship between constructs of test hypotheses. Moreover, to the latent construct or higher order constructs, it is recommended using SEM to test the set of relationship between latent constructs. Therefore, there is second order construct in this research, the author decides using SEM as main analyzing method. In SEM, the criteria is similar with CFA's standard, besides, the result is satisfied with the p-value $< .5$ representing for 95% of reliability and expressed positive or negative which is consistent with hypotheses is accepted. The structural equation modeling results indicated that the theoretical model had a fit to the data: $\chi^2[243] = 622.454$ ($p = .000$); CMIN/df = 2.562; CFI = 0.881; RMSEA = 0.089. The result supported hypothesis H1 with the regression weight values were positive and significant ($p < 0.001$). The unstandardized estimates are presented in Table 13, and the standardized estimates are in Figure 12. Consistent with H1, service quality was found to be positively associated with citizen satisfaction ($\gamma = 0.196$, $p < 0.001$). This hypothesis was also supported ($\beta = 0.903$, $p < 0.001$). H2, which proposed a positive relationship transparency and citizen satisfaction was not supported ($\gamma = 0.079$, $p = 0.108$).



$\chi^2[243] = 622.454$ ($p = .000$); CMIN/df = 2.562; CFI = 0.881; RMSEA = 0.089

Notes: p<0.05: (*), p<0.01 (**), p<0.001 (***)

Figure 12: Structural results (standardized estimates)

Table 13: Unstandardized structural paths

Hypotheses	Testing result	Est.(se)	C.R	p-value
H1: Citizen and Service	Supported	1.794(0.240)	7.481	***
H2: Citizen and Transparency	Not supported	-.120(0.074)	-1.608	0.108

Notes: *** p< 0.00; Est. (se): Estimate (standard error)

4.5 Discussion of research findings

As mentioned in the introduction, the primary contribution of this study is to examine the effects of service quality and transparency on citizen satisfaction in HCMC in order to make higher citizen satisfaction in the next time. For that purpose, the author has attempted to demonstrate that the hypothesis H1 is supported for the relationship between service quality and citizen satisfaction.

Four service quality dimensions namely, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and reliability significantly relate with citizen satisfaction in public administration service in HCMC. Among 5 quality dimensions, 4 intangible ones satisfy the reliability testing and represent the significant impact on the citizen satisfaction whereas tangibles dimension is the only one invalid dimension in HCMC public administration service. The strongest impact on satisfaction is by responsiveness ($\beta = .94$). The next most important is empathy ($\beta = .93$), followed by assurance ($\beta = .88$) and reliability ($\beta = .15$).

From this study, it can be stated that when citizens receive public administration service quality including civil servant willingness to help and providing prompt service (responsiveness); civil servant understand and identify citizen needs (empathy); knowledge and courtesy of civil servant that making belief (assurance); civil servant ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately (reliability), citizen tend to feel satisfaction.

Besides that, there are also many researchers studying in the relationship between

transparency and citizen satisfaction as mentioned in the literature reviewed. They proposed that transparency can directly affect citizen satisfaction (e.g Park & Blenkinsopp , 2011; Đam, Đo & Pham, 2014). However, in this research, the result of this study hypothesis H2 is unsupported for the relationship between transparency and citizen satisfaction in the public administration sector in HCMC; therefore, the result is a different from previous studies.

Chapter 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

The research is conducted with the purpose to give the city government in HCMC a better view of the factors that could affect citizen satisfaction for public administration services. The city government can use these analyses to improve citizen satisfaction in the next time. The model study was conducted by two hypotheses including service quality and transparency which affect citizen satisfaction for public administration services in HCMC (based on research of Agus, Barker & Kandampully, 2007 and Dam, Do & Pham, 2014). The result shows that hypothesis H1 is supported for the relationship between service quality and citizen satisfaction. Four factors which constitute service quality affect citizen satisfaction including Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance and Reliability. The results confirm the important role of employees (in term of responsiveness, empathy, assurance and reliability) in improving citizen satisfaction in the public service sector in general and public administration services sector in particular.

The results support the findings of previous research which point out that service quality plays an important role in affecting customer satisfaction (Mokhlis, Aleesa, & Mamat, (2011); Agus, Barker & Kandampully, 2007; Zaitul; Popi Fauziati & Ayu Bidiawati JR, 2014). In other words, this finding supports previous research in suggesting that an employee's attitude to customers has significant short-term and long term implications for organizations. It is clear that, over the years, the city government also pays attention to arranging, training staff in order to serve the people better. Moreover, a good civil servant must ensure two criteria including professional and good service attitude.

However, The results also shows that the hypothesis H2 is unsupported for the relationship between transparency and citizen satisfaction. It can be explained that samples of the survey focused on a number of areas including certified true copies; construction permits; registration of births - deaths; job creation with process and procedure are simple, clear. Thus, citizens do not much expect in transparency, they only pay attention to the service itself.

5.2 Implications of this research

Basing on the hypotheses testing result, four factors of service quality affect citizen satisfaction with responsiveness is the strongest affecting factor which brings the highest satisfaction level of citizens. It means that citizens need civil servants are always willing to help them and provide service quickly. Therefore, to increase citizen satisfaction the city government need select civil servant with professional skill and good behavior at The Department of Reception and Result Return in order to respond to citizen request.

The second affecting factor for citizen satisfaction is empathy. According to Vietnamese Interior Minister Nguyen Thai Binh (cited by Nguyen and Van, 2014) insensitive disease of the civil servant is a fairly common disease and rising at current. Thus, one other implication is that the city government should promote to increase moral education, thinking and behavior skills for civil servant. Besides that, organizations should combine punishment and reward to encourage employee. Consequently, employees are encouraged to understand citizens and identify their needs as well as provide attention to each citizen.

The third affecting factor is assurance. The mentioned implication is the city government need training civil servant regularly to improve their work. Arranging work appropriate his or her capabilities, qualifications and moral qualities.

The final affecting factor is reliability. Improving service quality through the contents: avoid errors when handling affairs, providing service as promise and show a sincere interest in solving problem; thereby, trust will be created by citizens for public administrative services in HCMC.

5.3 Recommendations

For Ho Chi Minh city government to effectively enhance citizen satisfaction. From the study, the relationship between citizen satisfaction and service quality in the public administration sector has been clearly established. Therefore, service quality should be improved in order to achieve citizen satisfaction. Specifically, there are some major solutions mentioning as follows:

Firstly, the government of HCM needs reform law and regulations on administrative procedures, especially procedures for public administration services. To be more precise, these regulations need in an unification, realization, transparency. This helps civil servant do their duty easily and more conveniently. Especially, administrative formalities are constructed simply, easily to understand and implement. Administrative procedures are set up with waiting time as short as possible. These procedures also Identify clearly the tasks and the processing requirements of each stage. Administrative formalities ensure adequate supply of the information that people need. Ensuring reception conditions at the best level in order to increase willingness to help citizen and provide service quickly. These reforms and regulations make an increase in Responsiveness of service quality.

Secondly, it should be mentioned that HCMC government must supervise the staff in service implementation that is in accordance with the procedures and regulations or not. Especially, on schedule, not late, ensuring credibility with citizen. Furthermore, the service results must gain of high accuracy, complete document, on time, no errors and confusion. This will create citizen will increase use of public administration services in long-term. In particular, in the process of receiving and handling the work, civil servants must master to practice good communication skills with people. All of these recommendations will raise Reliability to citizen.

One further recommendation is that the government of HCMC need improve the quality of civil servants. Training moral education and political quality for civil servants are first functions. The training should be regular and continuous and not only focusing newly recruited staff. Improve personal responsibility, public service ethics, service attitude of civil servant are next functions. In addition, the government of HCMC also has to prescribe the responsibility of the head of office to limit mistake. It should be noted that the training programs are suitable practical work demand. The HCMC government should select civil servants who have good moral qualities, professional skills, knowledge, understand the administrative procedures well and arrange them working at The Department of Reception and Result Return. The organizations also should research and develop a job description framework for civil servants in each working position. All of these recommendations will raise Assurance, Empathy as well as Responsiveness to the citizen.

Furthermore, the government Of HCMC should expand the "one - stop service" model at district governments. This creates favorable conditions for citizens when they perform administrative transactions, shorten transaction time and avoid travelling many times. This also helps reduce the cost and time of citizen. To clarify, Ha (2016) stated the "one - stop service" model is considered as an effective model. Citizens have sympathized, supported and appreciated for this model. People have not to cost a lot of time for traveling many times, many places. They just fill in the document and submit at the "one - stop service" and get the results by appointment. Thus, this model helps citizen save time, money and bring more conveniences. Besides, organizations need equip synchronous and modern facilities to increased citizen satisfaction. The organizations need complement means of work such as installing camera control systems, equipping photocopiers, connecting the internet to computer, installing electronic lookup table to guided administrative formalities and procedures; equipping the system scans the bar code to test result. In addition, the government of HCMC promotes the use of bar code software that is standardized according to process ISO 9001: 2008 .

Additionally, the government of HCMC must increase the apply the information technology in solving administrative procedures to create the maximum advantage and reduce costs for citizens. The government needs create good investment environment by reducing unofficial costs and shortening time of administrative transactions. To clarify, Huynh (2015) confirmed that the information technology application helps the governments at levels improve the management and administration. The information technology application also helps management more and more transparent, people approach information and knowledge easily.

Finally, it is recommended that the government of HCMC need should increase salary of public officials, which supports their life. This helps civil servant to keep the civil servant mind on their work. According to Dang Ngoc Tung - Chairman of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (cited by Xuan, 2015) salary for civil servants at present is too low, it does not guarantee the basic living needs and family care. If the government does not raise the salaries of civil servants, there will happen negative things such as: civil servants will work overtime during working hours, do not work with all their heart, corruption and so on.

Manager should strengthen with mission inspector for officials and civil servants, especially civil servants in positions which have the relationship with the rights and interests of the people. Manager also needs change work position resolutely for civil servants who are not incompetent, dismiss civil servants who passive, corrupt. Furthermore, the organization needs fund consulting and care citizen department to support citizen when they go to the government. The government of HCMC should create good environment to get in touch with civil authority organizations. Specifically, the government of HCMC must hold regularly dialogue forums with citizen to comments, criticize between citizens and the government level of HCMC. This certainly will increase citizen satisfaction as well as belief of the citizen in the government of HCMC.

5.4 Research limitations and implications for future research

There are a number of limitations to this study, which influences the reliability of the results as well as restrict the extent of the findings.

First, the limited time of the citizen when they go to administrative organizations in HCMC, thereby citizens evaluate not deeply the study.

Secondly, the limited space of sampling method when the survey is conducted in two districts out of 24 districts in HCMC. This is an issue that affirms a further investigation. Furthermore, sample of the survey focused on a number of areas such as certified true copies; construction permits; registration of births - deaths; job creation. Some other areas are paying attention of many people such as solving complaints, taxation, business registration license that should also be included in the sample for the survey to have results more comprehensive representative sample is collected the study.

Consequently, for any further researchers that are interested in this topic, the author would suggest expanding the investigation scale to a larger area: the whole public administration service and public administration agencies.

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Appendix 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir / Madam,

Our goal is to improve quality services as well as transparency of public administration services in HCMC to serve you better.

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your opinion will help us to see how we're doing overall and find out how we can improve.

I. Directions for reply

Please mark X in the box that you select. The value from 1= "strongly disagree/ the least satisfied" to 5 = " strongly agree/ the most satisfied" on each corresponding question with ascending agree levels.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

II. Questionnaire information

Num-ber	Question	Satisfaction level				
I. SERVICE QUALITY - Tangibles						
1	Public administrative organizations in HCMC have up-to-date technology equipment.					

2	Public administrative organizations' physical facilities in HCMC are visually appealing.					
3	Civil servants are well dressed and appear neat.					
4	The physical facility is equipped in accordance with the type of service provided.					
SERVICE QUALITY - Reliability						
5	When public administrative organizations in HCMC promise to do something by a certain time, it does so.					
6	When citizens have a problem, public administrative organizations in HCMC show a sincere interest in solving it.					
7	Public administrative organizations in HCMC are organization people can depend on.					
8	Public administrative organizations in HCMC provide its services at the time it promises to do so.					
9	Public administrative organizations in HCMC keep their records accurately.					
SERVICE QUALITY - Responsiveness						
10	Public administrative organizations in HCMC tell citizens exactly when services will be performed.					
11	Public administrative organizations' civil servants in HCMC give prompt service to citizens.					
12	Public administrative organizations' civil servants in HCMC are always willing to help citizens					

13	Public administrative organizations' civil servants in HCMC are never too busy to respond to citizen request.					
SERVICE QUALITY - Assurance						
14	The behavior of civil servants in HCMC encourages trust in citizens					
15	Citizens feel safe in their transaction with civil servants in HCMC					
16	Civil servants in HCMC are consistently polite with citizens					
17	Civil servants in HCMC have the knowledge to do their job well					
SERVICE QUALITY - Empathy						
18	Public administrative organizations in HCMC give citizens individual attention.					
19	Public administrative organizations in HCMC have operating hours convenient to all citizens.					
20	Civil servants in HCMC provide personal attention to each citizen.					
21	Public administrative organizations in HCMC have the citizen's best interest at heart.					
22	Civil servants in HCMC understand the specific needs of citizens.					
II. TRANSPARENCY						

23	Rules, procedures of administrative formalities are well posted up at the head offices.					
24	Time for receiving and returning document results is well posted at where implements administrative procedures in the HCMC public administrative organizations.					
25	The legal documents relating to the administrative settlement are posted at where implements administrative procedures in HCMC the public administrative organizations.					
26	Civil servants in HCHC wear card of name and title at work.					
III. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION						
27	Satisfied with the service attitude of civil servants at public administrative organizations in HCMC.					
28	Satisfied with tangibles of public administrative organizations in HCMC.					
29	Satisfied with the job done at public administrative organizations in HCMC.					

III. Some personal information

30. Your gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female

31. Your age group:

☐ From 18 to 24

☐ From 25 to 30

☐ From 31 to under 40

☐ Over 40

32. Your education

☐ Secondary school graduate

☐ High school graduate

☐ Junior college graduate, undergraduate student

☐ University graduate

☐ Post graduate

33. Your occupation

☐ Student

☐ Office staff

☐ Lecturer

☐ Housewife

☐ Worker

☐ Other

34. Your income

☐ Under 3 million VND

☐ 3 - 5 million VND

☐ 5-7 million VND

☐ Over 7 million VND

Sincerely appreciate your time and cooperation!

